

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /065 W
-----311322Z 004297 /46

O P 311115Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1956
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
CINCPAC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 5584

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PK
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

1. THE MAY 31 MAJOR DAILIES IN PAKISTAN GAVE FRONT PAGE
COVERAGE TO THE NEWS THAT THE LONG AWAITED BHUTTO/PNA
TALKS WILL BEGIN ON JUNE 3, PROBABLY AT A REST HOUSE
OUTSIDE OF PAWALPINDI. KAUSAR NIAZI, FEDERAL MINISTER
FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND BHUTTO CONFIDENT, TOLD A PRESS
CONFERENCE ON MAY 30 THAT THE TALKS WILL BEGIN ON JUNE 3,
RATHER THAN EARLIER, BECAUSE THE PM HAD TO CONSULT HIS
PARTY MEMBERS AS WELL AS FINALIZE PREPARATIONS FOR THE
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INTRODUCTION OF THE BUDGET IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.
A THIRD REASON WAS THAT JUNE 3, AS A FRIDAY, WOULD BE AN
AUSPICIOUS DAY FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE TALKS.

2. THE TWO SIDES ARE MOVING TO THE CONFERENCE HTBLE
AMIDST MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS AND SUSPICIONS THAT THE OTHER
PARTY IS OUT TO SABOTAGE THE TALKS. NEVERTHELESS, IN

OBVIOUS MANEUVERING TO BE SEEN AS THE INNOCENT PARTY SHOULD
THE TEJKS FAIL, BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO EXPRESS OPTIMISM
IN A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE TALKS - A SUCCESS TO
WHICH THEY CLAIM TO BE COMMITTED. ONE TEMPEST IN A TEA
POT IS WHETHER THE PNA ACTUALLY DELIVERED A LETTER TO THE
PM FORMALLY AGREEING TO THE TALKS OR WHETHER, AS THE PM
MAINTAINS, SUCH AGREEMENT WAS MERELY CONVEYED VERBALLY
BY THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR.

3. MAULANA KAUSAR NIAZI WHO, AS WELL AS BEING A MEMBER
OF BHUTTO'S CABINET, IS THE INFORMATION SECRETARY OF THE
PPP AND ONE OF THE PREMIER POLITICIANS IN THE PPP TOLD
THE PRESS CONFERENCE ON MAY 30 THAT THERE WERE NO PRE-
CONDITIONS TO THE TALKS BUT ANY ISSUE WHICH IS RAISED WILL
BE THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED. NIAZI, WHO WILL PROBABLY BE
ONE OF THE PPP NEGOTIATORS, ALONG WITH THE PM AND
HAFEEZ PIRZADA, WHEN ASKED DENIED THE PNA IMPLICATION
THAT SOME OF THEIR PRE-CONDITIONS HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AND
THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE TALKS WAS MERELY TO ESTABLISH A
DATE AND THE MODALITIES FOR FRESH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ELECTIONS. NIAZI ALSO REVEALED THAT BEGUM WALI KHAN,
WIFE OF JAILED NAP LEADER WALI KHAN, WOULD BE RELEASED
FROM DETENTION ON MAY 30. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THIS WAS
A PRELUDE TO THE RELEASE OF OTHER DETAINED LEADERS NIAZI
REFUSED COMMENT SAYING ONLY THAT EVERY LEGITIMATE
PROPOSAL WOULD BE CONSIDERED WITH AN OPEN MIND. NIAZI
TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE PM WAS CONSIDERING A COMPENSATION
PLAN FOR THOSE WHO HAD SUFFERED LOSS OF LIFE OR PROPERTY
DURING THE RECENT AGITATION. HE SAID THAT THE COMPENSA-
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TION WOULD BE AWARDED WITHOUT REGARD TO POLITICAL
AFFILIATION AS THE LOSS AFFECTS THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

4. NEWSPAPERS TODAY CARRIED THE PIR OF PAGARO'S PRESS
STATEMENT OF MAY 30 IN WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE
ACCUSED THE PRIME MINISTER OF USING THE TALKS AS A RUSE
IN ORDER TO GAIN TIME. HASSAN MAHMUD, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE
OF THE PIR, SPOKE TO THE PRESS ON BEHALF OF PIR SAHIB
AFTER THE STATEMENT HAD BEEN RELEASED. HE TOLD THE
REPORTERS THAT THE PIR'S STATEMENT WAS YET THE RESULT OF
CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER PNA LEADERS BUT WAS ISSUED BY
THE PIR ON HIS OWN. AT THE SAME TIME MAHMUD DENIED THAT
THERE WAS A RIFT BETWEEN THE PNA LEADERS. MAHMUD
MAINTAINED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PIR THOUGHT THAT THE TALKS
WOULD BE FRUITLESS. THE FACT THAT THE PIR OF PAGARO IS
ISSUING ALMOST DAILY PRESS RELEASES DENOUNCING THE

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CORRECTED COPY (GARBLED TEXT)

BHUTTO GOVERNMENT AND THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE ONLY AN INDICATION OF SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE PNA CAMP EVEN THOUGH THE PNA LEADERS CONTINUE TO ISSUE VEHEMENT DENIALS OF ANY RIFT. MOST RECENTLY, SARDER QAYYUM WAS QUOTED IN THE MAY 31 ISSUE OF NAWA-I-WAQT AS SAYING THAT THE PNA LEADERS ARE UNANIOMOUS IN THEIR VIEWS. A SECOND POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE PIR HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO PLAY THE STICK IN A CARROT AND STICK GAME DESIGNED TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE PM AND TO PREPARE A PNA FALL-BACK POSITION SHOULD THE TALKS FAIL.

5. A SPECIAL MEETING BETWEEN THE PM AND SENIOR MILITARY
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OFFICERS, INCLUDING THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, WAS HELD THE MORNING OF MAY 31 ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.

THE GOP PRESS RELEASE SAID THAT THE MEETING WAS CALLED IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. IT IS ALSO LIKELY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BRIEF THE MILITARY OFFICERS, AS KEY PLAYERS IN THE DRAMA, ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MEETING HAS REVIVED RUMORS THAT ONE OF THE PRE-CONDITIONS TO THE TALKS WAS THE LIFTING OR RELAXATION OF MARTIAL LAW IN THE THREE CITIES WHERE IT IS CURRENTLY IMPOSED. AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE KAUSAR NIAZI REFUSED TO COMMENT WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE SPECIAL MEETING INDICATED THAT MARTIAL LAW WOULD BE LIFTED. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATIONS ZAS FER BETTER NOW AND THAT THE SITUATION WAS UNDER COMPLETE CONTROL.

6. PRESS ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES ARE CONTINUING ALTHOUGH THEY SEEM TO HAVE ABATED SLIGHTLY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS. A PARTICULARLY VIRULENT ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE URDU DAILY, MUSAWAT, THE OFFICIAL PPP NEWSPAPER OWNED BY BEGUM BHUTTO, IN ITS MAY 30 IDITION. THE ARTICLE ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES OF WORKING TO PARALYZE PAKISTAN BECAUSE OF PAKISTAN'S CENTRAL ROLE IN THE ARAB WORLD.

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